

Remarks on Receiving the Rotary International Award of Honor and an Exchange With Reporters March 4, 1993

Award of Honor

Clifford Dochterman. Mr. President, as the former president of Rotary International, I have the occasion on several occasions to present an award called the Rotary International Award of Honor presented to selected heads of state. We've only presented this on about 12 occasions. This award is given for humanitarian service. And the service that you're giving for Rotary International's programs of support for immunization of children in the world, as well as our programs of humanitarian aid in Bosnia and Croatia, gives me the opportunity—if you would accept this award on behalf of 1,100,000 Rotarians of the world in 187 countries—it would be a great pleasure—to accept this award.

The President. Thank you for your good work, and thank you for the award. I appreciate that.

Mr. Dochterman. It has a ribbon there, but I'll not be so presumptuous to put it over your—

The President. Isn't it beautiful? Thank you.

Mr. Dochterman. This award has been presented on selected occasions on behalf of those who support humanitarian efforts throughout the world.

The President. I'm deeply honored.

World Trade Center Bombing

Q. Excuse me, Mr. President, can you tell us anything about the arrest and whether the American people can now believe that they are secure in that someone has been arrested?

The President. I can tell you that I was informed this morning about it. And the authorities are still working on a statement that I think will be issued to you later this afternoon. I think they'll be able to give you some more information later this afternoon.

Q. Now the suspect though is linked to terrorism, should Americans feel less secure about their safety?

The President. I think you should wait until the—I think, first of all, the American people should be very proud of the work done by the law enforcement authorities. They worked hard together. They worked aggressively. They worked without stopping until they made, I think, a very quick arrest. But I'd like for you to wait until the proper authorities have a chance to make their statement to you later this afternoon. And then tomorrow I will have a chance to make some more comments on it.

Q. Can we assume that it's terrorism?

The President. I don't think you should assume anything until you hear the statement today. I know that an arrest was made. I know who was arrested. I think that at the time I was informed this morning there were a lot of other questions we did not know the answers to. And they're trying to get as much information together as possible to give you later this afternoon.

NOTE: The presentation began at 3:07 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Exchange With Reporters Following a Meeting With Tilden Middle School Students

March 4, 1993

Health Care Task Force

Q. Mr. President, can you explain to us why your health care task force won't be open to the public?

The President. No working group of the Government before they have a proposal—that

would be like opening the White House at every staff meeting we have. We can't do that. I mean, they've got 400 people over there, working continuously on thousands of different issues. Nobody ever does that. We would never—we can't get anything done.

Also, what we've done has been publicly reported. Most of the papers have been released or leaked. But they have to be able to work. It's an ongoing project. It's like any other staff work the White House does.

Q. But how do we know that there is no conflict of interest since we don't know who is working on it and we can't attend any of the meetings, the public meetings?

The President. It's just like any other—how do you know that about anything we do here at the White House?

World Trade Center Bombing

Q. Can you be any more reassuring on the whole terrorism question, sir? This is obviously what people are going to be most worried about.

The President. I think that people should be very reassured by the incredibly rapid work

done by the law enforcement officials involved. It is very impressive. All resources were put into this from the moment the explosion occurred, and I think they did a remarkable job. I don't think I should say more than I know now. And I think you should wait until the statement is made tonight by the appropriate officials, and I'll be glad to give you further comments. But I think the American people should be very much reassured by the speed with which the law enforcement folks responded to this circumstance.

NOTE: The exchange began at 3:25 p.m. in the North Foyer at the White House. A portion of this exchange could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks on Signing the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Amendments of 1993 and an Exchange With Reporters

March 4, 1993

The President. I want to, first of all, acknowledge the presence here of Senators Mitchell, Moynihan, Riegle, Sarbanes, Sasser, Hatfield, and Durenberger; the Speaker and Congressman Matsui and Congressman Fish. I would also like to acknowledge the Labor Secretary and two of his employees whom I will recognize formally in just a moment.

Today I am signing important legislation to extend unemployment benefits long term. I want to thank the Congress for passing this bill, which is the first provision in the economic package I recommended to them in my joint address.

The bill reforms existing law. It symbolizes the success of a new management style we are bringing to the Government. And it reminds us of how critical it is to adopt the rest of our economic plan, to increase investment, reduce the deficit, create private-sector jobs, and increase the incomes of working Americans.

We have extended unemployment benefits. Now it's time to extend jobs. It's been less than a month since I asked the Secretary of Labor to prepare the emergency legislation. I want to commend the leadership of the Congress, of those who are here and those who are not, who made rapid action possible. Thanks to

them, the benefits of millions of Americans will proceed without interruption. More important, this legislation takes an existing pilot program and applies it nationally in ways that I am convinced will help tens of thousands of workers immediately. This reform was brought to the attention of Secretary Reich by line workers at the Department of Labor, and it reflects the kind of innovation and imagination we must bring to the entire Federal Government. It is at the core of the national performance review initiative that the Vice President and I announced yesterday.

The Department of Labor funds a demonstration project in New Jersey that matches up workers who are permanently displaced with training and reemployment services. They use existing data to provide services to people in need. Once they're identified, the workers receive the kind of counseling, training, and retraining that gets them back to work faster and often at higher wages than would have otherwise been the case.

Secretary of Labor Reich held a town meeting in his Department of Labor to break down the walls that too often have existed between senior management and Federal employees. Because